

Section 7

Navy Volunteer Recognition

The best community service program cannot succeed without the dedication of its volunteers.

Properly recognizing volunteers assures their commitment to the program. This section describes how to maintain motivated, enthusiastic, and experienced volunteers. Suggestions in this section, both informal and formal, will help the Command Coordinator identify strategies that motivate volunteers, and reinforce their willingness to continue supporting the Navy Community Service Program (NCSP).

Volunteers

When a community service project is initiated, it attracts larger numbers of volunteers willing to allocate time to support the effort. However, as time passes, the number of volunteers tends to dwindle. People stop volunteering if they do not feel appreciated, if they are assigned tasks or projects they do not enjoy, if the working conditions are not conducive with the volunteer's expectations, or if volunteers lack support in the work environment.

Ways to motivate volunteers include:

- Paying attention to local cultural behaviors and adapting the style of supervision and recognition of volunteers accordingly.
- Creating a fun, friendly work environment among Navy volunteers and Flagship Partners. Providing refreshments works wonders.
- Explaining clearly, the goals of the Flagship Partnership to everyone involved. Volunteers will not stay active if they are not committed to the project.
- Demonstrating to the volunteers how their contributions make a difference. The impact of contributions may not be readily visible to volunteers.
- Meeting with volunteers regularly to share experiences and address concerns.

The purpose of this is two-fold: it provides the Command Coordinator with access to valuable input from volunteers to further improve the program's effectiveness and it promotes a feeling of team spirit among the volunteers. Volunteers learn from one another. They share ideas regarding what works best for them in dealing with certain situations, and develop new friendships based on a common goal of dedicating time and talents for community service.

- Providing resources for the volunteers. The Command Coordinator in conjunction with Flagship Partners should attend to details such as arranging lunch, ensuring waivers and release forms were signed, and providing supplies. This allows volunteers to focus on specific tasks. Observance of Flagship Partnership projects and activities allows the Command Coordinator to provide support and guidance to volunteers as well as to address concerns and resolve problems that arise during the project or activity.
- Conducting orientation and training for all incoming volunteers. In addition to preparing volunteers for responsibilities and activities, it demonstrates from the onset that volunteers are valued and essential to the success of the Flagship Partnership.
- Assigning volunteers to tasks that take into consideration their reasons for volunteering to participate in the NCSP and Flagship Partnerships.
- Reviewing and changing volunteer assignments as motivational needs change. Graduate volunteers to more challenging tasks or new work environments to maintain their interest.

Volunteer Recognition

It is essential that volunteers are recognized frequently, promptly, and consistently. Recognition is the most powerful strategy to retain volunteers and to recruit new volunteers. Volunteers should be recognized when something special is accomplished. The degree of recognition should be appropriate to the contribution of the volunteer. Recognition:

Should be continuous and ongoing. Consistent acknowledgment of volunteer efforts such as praise, thank-you notes, or a special privilege will encourage continued volunteer participation.

Should conform with the chain of command. When an organization commends volunteers, the chain of command should be informed. Informing the chain of command will help garner support for the volunteer in participating in the next project or activity.

Should be prompt and specific. Timely recognition of volunteers demonstrates that the command leadership supports the Flagship Partnership as well as acknowledges that volunteer efforts are important. Timely recognition also provides feedback for the volunteers by sharing information with regard to the success of their efforts toward addressing community needs as well as Flagship Partnership goals and objectives.

Should be public. The Command Coordinator should prepare articles including photographs for publication in public or military newspaper. The Public Affairs Office is available to assist the Command Coordinator with guidelines for publishing articles in local papers, as well as inviting local media groups to cover NCSP and Flagship Partnership projects and events. News coverage can motivate individuals to volunteer, increase interest in Flagship Partnerships, as well as reinvigorate a current Flagship Partnership.

Recognition Strategies

Strategies to recognize volunteer achievement within the command community and the local, state, and national community include:

Letters of Commendation (Figure 7-1) from the Flagship Sponsor, Commanding Officer, or the Command Coordinator are well received. In addition, Letters of Appreciation (Figure 7-2) from the command to the Flagship Partner should also be prepared. A Letter of Appreciation for Use by a Flagship Partner (Figure 7-3) should also be encouraged.

Certificates of Appreciation (Figure 7-4) should be presented to the individual volunteer from the command or Flagship Partners during a partnership project or activity that specifically recognizes volunteer service. Command Coordinators may order formal Certificates of Volunteer Appreciation for military and civilian volunteers. For details, contact your Area Coordinator, or call (901) 874-4270, DSN 882-4270, or Fax (901) 874 2698. The Command Coordinator may also produce the certificates locally.

Evaluation Reports. Voluntary service offers another dimension to evaluate leadership and personal development. Stellar performance as a volunteer should be recognized at the command level. Command Coordinators should ensure that this is emphasized to ensure that volunteer initiatives are properly acknowledged by supervisors and reflected through avenues that potentially promote their careers in the Navy.

Figure 7-1

**Letter of Commendation
for the Navy Community Service Program**

(NAME OF COMMANDER)

takes pleasure in presenting

a

LETTER OF COMMENDATION

to

(Name of Volunteer

United States Navy)

for

"Outstanding service to the Navy Community Service Program from (beginning date) to (ending date), (year). (Name of volunteer) contributed directly to the (name of Flagship) as a (tutor, playground assistant, club leader, mentor, etc.) in the (name of Flagship Partner). His/her unselfish participation in this program was in response to the national goal of greater voluntary community action, as established by the President of the United States. This contribution to the (name of community) has assuredly improved the (education, citizenship, health and fitness, environmental conservation awareness, drug demand reduction, and humanitarian assistance) of the (Flagship Partner) involved. (Name of volunteer)'s exceptional skill, personal initiative, and dedication to the community reflect great credit upon himself/herself and his/her command, and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Figure 7-2

**Letter Of Appreciation To Flagship Partners
for the Navy Community Service Program**

(Command Letterhead Stationery)

(Director or Principal)

(Name of Flagship Partner)

(Street Address of Flagship Partner)

(City, State, ZIP Code)

Dear (Name of Director or Principal),

In order for any partnership to be effective, the firm commitment of both partners is required. I believe that much of the success of my command's partnership with (name of Flagship Partner) may be attributed to the total dedication and thorough attention to detail of (name of person being commended), one of your many outstanding staff members. (Name of person being commended)'s professionalism, program management skills and ability to effectively motivate and communicate with volunteers are tremendous assets to our partnership. His/her contributions play a significant role in our ability to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Please convey my sincerest appreciation to (name of person being commended) for his/her efforts to enhance our partnership.

Sincerely,

(Commanding Officer's Name), (Rank), U.S. Navy

Commanding Officer

Figure 7-3

**Letter of Appreciation for Use by a Flagship Partner
for the Navy Community Service Program
(Organization Letterhead Stationery)**

(Commanding Officer's Rank and Name)

(Commanding Officer's Title)

(Navy Activity)

(Navy Activity Address)

(City, State, ZIP Code)

Dear (Commanding Officer's Rank and Last Name):

On behalf of (name of Flagship Partner), I would like to commend (volunteer's rank/rating, last name) for his/her volunteer efforts as a participant in the Navy Community Service Program and Flagship Partnerships between (name of Navy command) and (name of Flagship Partner). (volunteer's rank/rating and last name) is a highly professional, very personable individual whose presence provides a positive role model for our youth to emulate, and significantly enhances the Navy's image in this community.

We appreciate the many contributions (volunteer's rank/rating and last name) makes in support of our youth and look forward to benefiting from his/her continued partnership program participation.

Sincerely,

(Name of Principal/Director), (Title)

Figure 7-4

**Certificate of Appreciation From the
Command And Flagship Partner
for the Navy Community Service Program**

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

PRESENTED TO _____

In recognition of service to

(Name of Flagship Partner)

*Your contribution to the success of our
Community Service Flagship Partnership
is deeply appreciated.*

*We hope this certificate will serve
as a memento of this occasion*

Presented on this _____ day of _____, 19__

(Director)

(Commanding Officer)

(Name of Base/Command)

Awards opportunities include the NCSP sponsored annual awards program to recognize outstanding community service contributions by Navy commands. The five Flagship programs recognize efforts focusing on education, citizenship, health safety and fitness, environmental stewardship, drug demand reduction, and humanitarian assistance. The award categories are based upon command population, and emphasize command-sponsored and approved involvement.

A variety of local, state, national, and Navy volunteer award programs also exist. Command Coordinators should contact local partners, the state agencies, and national organizations to obtain information pertaining to award programs. For information regarding the Navy Community Service Award and other national awards, refer to Figure 7-5. Tips for writing a Volunteer Award Nomination Application are included in Figure 7-6.

Invitations to Recognition Events including appreciation breakfasts, luncheons, and potluck suppers help solidify partnership relationships. These events also encourage communication and interaction between volunteers participating in the Flagship Partnership.

Special Recognition of volunteers often occurs at special meetings, Chamber of Commerce events, assemblies, holiday occasions, Volunteer Month or Day, and Navy Recognition Day. Plaques may be given, trees planted, or murals painted to commemorate the involvement of all partners. Another alternative is to establish an honor roll of volunteers to be posted in the command, school, or organization.

Navy and Community Media should be included in the recognition of volunteers. The Command Coordinator is encouraged to consistently communicate recognition information for publication in newspapers, magazines, newsletters, brochures, on the radio, and on television. Consult with your Public Affairs Officer for instructions regarding contact with local media groups. Other options may include submitting base newspaper articles with pictures, "BZ" messages, Navy feature stories in All Hands, Navy Times, and Fleet Hometown News Releases. The Public Affairs Officer is available to assist the Command Coordinator with the submission procedures. In addition the NCSP maintain a quarterly Newsletter highlighting achievements of Navy commands in community service. See section three for more information concerning article submissions.

Figure 7-5

**Navy and National Awards Contact Information
for the Navy Community Service Program**

Award: NAVY COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD (BUPERSINST 1650.12)

Point of Contact: Naval Personnel Command (PERS-605)

Community Service Program Manager

5720 Integrity Drive

Millington, TN 38055-6050

Phone: (901) 874-4270

DSN: 882-4270

Award: OUTSTANDING SCHOOL VOLUNTEER AWARD

Point of Contact: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PARTNERS IN EDUCATION
(NAPE)

901 Pitt Street, Suite 320

Alexandria, VA 22314

(703) 836-4880

Award: PRESIDENT'S SERVICE AWARD

The Points of Light Foundation is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works with the support of caring Americans who believe that volunteerism can be a powerful antidote to the social problems that affect neighborhoods and communities. The foundation focuses on finding, spotlighting and showcasing outstanding individuals, families, groups or organizations, businesses and labor unions engaged in direct and consequential community service. It is also developing a resource database of existing exemplary programs. Eighteen to twenty awards are given per year. Nomination forms are distributed to organizations and are available upon request in the fall.

Figure 7-5

**Navy and National Awards Contact Information
for the Navy Community Service Program**

Point of Contact:

POINTS OF LIGHT FOUNDATION

1400 T Street, NW STE 900

Washington, DC 20005

(202) 223-9186

Award: THE CONGRESSIONAL AWARD

Younger service members may be nominated for the Congressional Award. Created by Public Law 96-114, the Congressional Award Act is presented on a noncompetitive, individual basis to young people in the United States between the ages of 14 and 23 in recognition of initiative, achievement and service. To earn a Congressional Award, participants set and achieve individual goals in four program areas: voluntary public service, personal development, physical fitness, and expeditions.

Individuals with disabilities are equally able to earn a Congressional Award, as goals are set based on individual interest, need, and ability. The young person must earn the award. There are no limits set on the number of awards that may be earned throughout the country.

Members of the United States House of Representatives and Senate recognize their constituents who earn Bronze and Silver Congressional Awards at local, citywide, or statewide ceremonies. The Gold Congressional Award ceremony is held in the United States Capitol and is presided over by the congressional leadership. As members of Congress recognize their young constituents through presentation of Congressional Awards, our democratic values and institutions are enhanced and strengthened.

The National Office of the Congressional Award Foundation works with congressional delegations to establish local Congressional Award Councils throughout the country. These councils are composed of individuals with a wide range of skills who serve at the invitation of their senators and representatives. The councils promote and administer the program at the local level, with assistance from the National Office.

Figure 7-5

**Navy and National Awards Contact Information
for the Navy Community Service Program**

Point of Contact:

The Congressional Award

PO Box 77440

Washington, DC 20013

(202) 226-0130

(202) 226-0131 Fax

Award: MILITARY OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER SERVICE MEDAL

The purpose of the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal (MOVSM) is to recognize members of the United States Armed Forces, including reserve components, who distinguish themselves through outstanding community service. The MOVSM is intended to recognize exceptional community service over time and not a single act or achievement. It is intended to honor direct support of community activities. To be eligible for the award, individual's service must:

- Be to the civilian community, to include the military family community;
- Be significant in nature and produce tangible results;
- Reflect favorably on the Military Service and the Department of Defense; and
- The service member should normally perform a sustained, direct hands-on community service over a three-year period. Members assigned to deploying units may include deployed time in the three-year period.

The Commanding Officer will certify that the eligibility requirements have been met and service was honorable throughout the award period. For consideration for the MOVSM award, a service member must be recommended by anyone senior to them. The recommendation must be submitted via the Commanding Officer using OPNAV 1650/3 (3-76), Personal Award Recommendation S/N 0107-LF-016-5015. This form is available in the Navy supply system using requisitioning procedures contained in NAVSUP P-2002D, Navy Stock List of Publications and Forms. The MOVSM is further detailed in SECNAVNOTE 1650, 12 April 94.

Figure 7-6

Tips for Writing Volunteer Award Nomination Applications

Writing a dynamic, succinct award nomination can be a challenge, but can make the deciding difference between two equally exceptional nominees. Here are some guidelines to help you develop a clear, concise, *award-winning* nomination.

- Follow the directions for submitting the award nomination. Due to the large number of award nominations submitted, readers are asked to evaluate the nomination forms. Points are usually assigned to each category on the form with points deducted if directions are not followed.
- Provide only the information requested and use the exact space allocated. Do not attach additional pages or information unless otherwise instructed.
- Type, rather than hand-write, the information requested on the nomination form. Leave clear margins and use the same typeface throughout.
- Present the information in clear and concise paragraphs. Never write one giant paragraph if several ideas are expressed. The information should be well organized.
- Review the eligibility requirements before preparing the nomination form. Most forms will be disqualified if the individual being nominated does not meet the requirements. For example, it may be required that the individual has volunteered for at least one year; do not nominate a person who has volunteered for less time.
- Provide a clear description of the volunteer's skills and participation in volunteer activities. Emphasize unique contributions the volunteer has made. Explain how the volunteer's contribution helps accomplish the targeted goals.
- Describe the impact of the volunteer's contribution as it pertains to the youth and community involved.
- Obtain endorsements if requested as part of the award nomination package. Endorsements may be obtained from teachers, administrators, students, or members of the community. Be sure to label each endorsement. Signatures or lists of endorsers without endorsement statements do not fulfill the requirement.

Navy Community Service Program

Other Command Recognition Activity Ideas: Command Coordinators may prepare recommendation to the Commanding Officer or Executive Officer, then assist by implementing ideas such as:

- Reserve a desirable parking space or award a free dinner for the Volunteer of the week, month, quarter, or year.
- Designate extra points for personnel participating as volunteers in a command-sponsored partnership program and nominate these volunteers for Sailor of the Quarter or Year.
- Consider nominating the individual for a Navy Achievement Medal if they have demonstrated significant and sustained commitment.
- Dedicate a Volunteers are Important People (VIP) bulletin board with photographs of outstanding volunteers along with action shots and summaries of the events.
- List upcoming events on a bulletin board and include a signup sheet.
- Initiate a volunteer celebrity breakfast with a local media person or a senior military person.
- Recognize experienced volunteers with leadership abilities by appointing them as mentors to personnel who are new to the program.
- Grant special liberty to outstanding volunteers.
- Plant a tree to commemorate partnership.
- Conduct a Volunteer Appreciation Day.